

March Field Trips

Please note we'll follow pandemic safety protocols: mask wearing, distancing, and attendees will be responsible for their own safe transportation.

Saturday, March 6, 2021: Loess Bluffs NWR in Missouri. This trip is rescheduled from February 20 because the refuge froze over. Meet at 8:00 am at the Baker Wetlands Discovery Center parking lot, 1365 N. 1250 Road, Lawrence. Map/directions to



Loess Bluffs will be provided. It's about 115 miles away—less than 2 hours. Due to Covid you must organize your own transportation. But if you can possibly car pool, please

do so as a large caravan of cars could diminish our success. On arrival we will drive the 10 mile loop around the main water body. Several telescopes—religiously sanitized—will be provided. At stops everyone must wear masks.

It will be about peak Snow Goose migration so hundreds of thousands should wow us. Anticipate several hundred Trumpeter Swans, and up to 15 species of other geese and waterfowl. Many eagles will have dispersed to nest, but there may still be significant numbers. Sparrows, wrens and woodland species are also possible. We should be heading home by noon, but you may want to bring a sack lunch and make a second loop around the area on your own.

Questions? Roger Boyd: rboydbird69@gmail.com or 785-424-0595.

See page 3 for more trips in March and April!

Monday, March 22nd Peruvian Wildlife

In summer 2019, Jim Bresnahan and daughters Jenna Johnson and Erin Paden traveled to Peru visiting Cusco, Rainbow Mountain, and many Incan ruins including Machu Picchu. They then spent 9 days in Manu National Park, a 10,000 square mile UNESCO World Heritage Site, purportedly the most biodiverse area on the planet. Manu spans the cloud forest of the eastern Andes and the Amazon basin, sheltering 5,000 species of plants; 160 species of mammals including the extremely endangered giant otter; 1,000 species of birds; and almost 300 species of amphibians and reptiles.

Jenna and Erin went home after the Manu adventure while Jim went on to Arequipa and the Colca Canyon, home to Andean condors and vicunas, wild relatives of llamas and alpacas. Join us on 3/22 via Zoom to enjoy a photographic and video tour of the wildlife of Peru's mountains, grasslands and rainforest.

Jim received a B.A. in Biology from Southern Illinois, a D.V.M degree from Illinois, and a post-doctoral M.S. from Missouri. In addition to three years of veterinary practice in his hometown of Granite City, Illinois, he was University Veterinarian and Director of Veterinary Services at Duke for 5 years and University Veterinarian and Director of the Animal Care Unit at KU for 25 years before his retirement in 2009. He was privileged to be the veterinarian for a rare prosimian primate center while at Duke and a wildlife rehab program while at KU.



Grey-breasted
Mountain Toucan
By Jim Bresnahan

To see Jim's splendid photos and hear his stories about Peru, go to the JAS website "Events" section on 3/22 and click on the link for the meeting at 6:50-6:55. Follow the Zoom instructions.

The JAS Board has a Perch for You!

All members are encouraged to volunteer for officer or board positions. Gift JAS with *your ideas and energy* so we can stay relevant and achieve our aspirations. Talk to president Jim Bresnahan to find out more about the opportunities or to nominate someone: jbresnahan@ku.edu or 785-766-9625.

Officers are: president, vice president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer. There are 6 at-large board members and a variety of committee chair positions. See the roster at right. The basic board member obligation is attendance at the monthly board meetings. Committee chairs attend board meetings and have duties specific to their committee. Jim can put you in touch with any chair so you can ask questions about the work.

Take this chance to deepen and enrich your commitment to birds and conservation. Nominate yourself for any position you think you would enjoy. Officer elections are in May with new officers taking over in June and most committee chair and at-large board positions would also hand over in June. We truly hope to see some new faces next summer.



Phyllis Fantini Leaving JAS Board

At-large board member and Hospitality Chair Phyllis Fantini is stepping down from the JAS board because of health concerns. She plans to move back to her home state of Delaware later in the spring. Phyllis, can we come visit you and go to the beach together?

Phyllis brought her fresh perspective to board deliberations and volunteered at seed sales and other events besides her duties as Hospitality Chair. She is active in the Lawrence community, and it is not just Jayhawk Audubon that will feel her absence. Phyllis, thank you for your hard work on behalf on JAS! We wish you the best of outcomes.

Join the JAS Email List

- Help us go electronic to reduce our carbon footprint. We want to keep you informed about Audubon news so we need email addresses for most members before we can forgo a paper newsletter.
- Get brief reminders of programs and other events, *but only one or two per month.*
- Get a quick access newsletter summary in your inbox each month with a link to the full-text color version on the website.

Just go to the Jayhawk Audubon Society website <https://www.jayhawkaudubon.org/>. Scroll down to the "Sign up for our emails" box and enter your email to be added to our contact list. Add JAS to your contact list and you're set.

JAS Officers & Board Members

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785-766-9625 or jbresnahan@ku.edu
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Christmas Count: Galen Pittman
Eagles Day: Bunnie Watkins
Hospitality: Vacant
Historian: Ron Wolf
Books & Feeders: Ron & Joyce Wolf
Audubon of Kansas Chapter Rep: Joyce Wolf

Field Trips to Slake That Cabin Fever!

Sun, March 7: Boyd Yard, Baldwin

Meet at 8:30am at the Baldwin Swimming Pool, 3rd and Fremont St. to park. We'll walk one half block north to my house and observe backyard feeders from south side of garage. Mask wearing will be expected. Telescopes provided. Target species will be purple finch, pine siskin, goldfinch and a host of other typical feeder birds. We have the option of walking back to the swimming pool along a woodland trail. My eBird yard surveys usually post 15-22 species.

Questions? Roger Boyd: rboydbird69@gmail.com
or 785-424-0595.

Sat, March 13: Black Jack Battlefield

Meet at 8:00 am in parking lot south of house at the Battlefield. (163 E 2000 Rd. Wellsville, KS. Go 3 miles east of Baldwin on US 56 and then 1/2 mile south.) We will walk a few trails—could be damp to wet—through the woods and prairie. Main birds will be woodpeckers and sparrows but kinglets, creepers, wrens, and nuthatches are also around. ***Should be a great trip for less experienced birders wanting to learn how to identify our more common woodland species.*** Mask wearing expected. Contact Roger as for 3/7.

Sat, March 20: Clinton Lake

Meet on dam at pullout by outlet tower at 8:00 am. Telescopes available; mask wearing will be expected. Focus will be on identification of the numerous waterfowl and gulls potentially present. Once we have seen what we can we will travel to the south end of the dam and scope that area of the lake. Depending on amounts of ice and wind, species diversity and abundance can vary greatly from one day to the next. Contact Roger as for 3/7.

Wed, March 24: Kansas River & Bismarck Lake

Meet on the north side of the Kaw on Elm St. just north of Bowersock Power plant at 8:30 am. There is a parking lot there between Elm and Locust—enter off Locust—or park on Elm. We'll check out gulls and waterfowl from the levee. From there we'll drive to Bismarck Lake on the west side of E 1600 Rd, about ¼ mile north of N 1700 Rd. Main focus here will be waterfowl in early spring migration, but we'll look for longspurs in the fields. Telescopes on site; masks required. Contact Roger Boyd as for 3/7.

Wed, April 7: Clinton Model Airplane Field

Meet at 8:00 am at the field below the dam, south of Eagle Bend Golf Course. We will walk the trail to the east out through the restored grassland/wetlands. We should find a variety of sparrows. Red-winged Blackbirds ought to be returning to territories. There may be wrens and early rails but unpredictable by weather and season. This is early spring and could have a variety of surprises for us. Trails can be wet. Contact Roger Boyd as for 3/7.

Lawrence Public Library Events

Train Park Tree Tour - Winter Edition

SAT | March 13 | 10-11 AM | Watson Park

We'll meet by the train in Watson Park (AKA the Train Park) to learn some tree I.D., without the leaves! The tour will be led by LPL information assistant (and former certified arborist) Jake Vail. **Masks required.**

Nature Book Club - Spring Equinox

Wed, March 17. 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Online.

Discuss fiction or nonfiction books that emphasize the natural world. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/y5mz83dv> for more details. Contact Shirley Braunlich with questions: sbraunlich@lplks.org. She's also ready with lots of ideas about what to read next! Just ask.

Why Wait for Spring for Birdsong?

The Minnesota Dept. of Natural Resources has created an easy-to-use interactive picture that lets you listen to your favorite songbirds with one click. Go to https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/mcvmagazine/bird_songs_interactive/index.html and enjoy. It might help you connect the song to the bird when you hear it out in the world. The picture is copied below so you can see all the birds they've included, but of course **this one is not interactive**. You have to visit the website for that sweet experience. Bring a child along!



By Bill Reynolds

See Sandhill Cranes on the Platte

During this unsettling pandemic year the rhythms of plant and animal life were welcome distractions reminding us that human affairs are not the center of the universe. Sandhill Crane migrations are an ancient melody in those rhythms.

Right now, cranes are massing on the Platte River in Nebraska, resting, feeding, and dancing for mates. Due to Covid the Rowe Sanctuary viewing opportunities are limited this year. For current news: <https://rowe.audubon.org/visit/guided-crane-viewing-experience>. However you can drive up yourself and view the cranes on the river in a socially distanced way. The birds are doing what they have done for eons. It's a spectacle worth a trip: <https://visitkearney.org/self-guided-crane-tours/> There is also the Crane Cam maintained by the sanctuary. Find it through the link above.



American Avocets. National Park Service. Patrick Myers. Avocets are abundant at Cheyenne Bottoms in spring & fall.

Attacking the Fishing Line Problem

JAS Board member Len Scotto is looking into a cooperative project to mitigate the problem of discarded monofilament fishing line at Clinton Lake. Discarded plastic of all types is taking a terrible toll on wildlife on land and in lakes and oceans. Birds and other animals get wrapped in improperly discarded monofilament fishing line and die or are badly damaged. It's another deeply distressing case of human carelessness wreaking terrible suffering on innocent creatures. We hope to help in some small way. We'll keep you posted as the project shapes up and perhaps you'll be able to help too.

Wings & Wetlands Festival Goes Virtual for 2021

Evenings: March 24 ~ March 26

Cheyenne Bottoms Wildlife Area and Quivira NWR are open for birding and ideally suited for staying distanced from other humans. However, a big draw of the biennial Wings & Wetlands Festival is packing into a van to bird with a knowledgeable guide—a quintessential pandemic no-no. So organizers are being responsible and Zooming the event.

They have recruited an impressive slate of speakers, and included Q & A sessions with same:

- ★ Kenn Kaufman: Kansas Wetlands—Crossroads of the Bird World
 - ★ Sharon Stiteler: Smartphone Birding Workshop aka The Bird Chick
 - ★ Bob Gress: Diversity of Birds on KS Wetlands
 - ★ Gene Young: Shorebird ID
 - ★ Chuck Otte: Be a Better Birder
 - ★ Pat Silovsky: Raptors
 - ★ And more!
- There will be chat rooms on bird sightings, birding locations and bird trivia. Registrants also get on-demand resources to keep:
- KS Wetlands Education Center's Cheyenne Bottoms Virtual Tour
 - The Bottoms Great Oasis Video

- Shorebirds of Cheyenne Bottoms: Past-Present-Future. Robert Penner, Nature Conservancy
- Birding by Ear: Jackie Augustine, AOK
- Prairie Chicken Lek Tour Video
- *Ava: A year of adventure in the life of an American Avocet* - children's book reading
- Interactive pin map of festival-goers
- Videos of morning bird sightings
- Explore Great Bend discount bundles!

All this for only \$20.00! Get more info and register: <https://www.wingsandwetlands.com/>

You may also call the Kansas Wetlands Education Center with questions: 877-243-9268

*Until you dig a hole,
you plant a tree,
you water it and
make it survive,
you haven't done a thing.*

You are just talking.

~ Wangari Maathai

*winner of the 2004 Nobel Peace prize
in part for her work founding the
Green Belt Movement in Kenya.*

Since Maathai started the movement in 1977, over 51 million trees have been planted, and over 30,000 women have been trained in forestry, food processing, bee-keeping, and other trades that help them earn income while preserving their lands and resources.

<https://www.greenbeltmovement.org/who-we-are>

An interesting side note for Kansans, Wangari Maathai earned her BSc degree in Biology from Mt. St. Scholastica (now Benedictine College) in Atchison, Kansas in 1964.

Create Your Own Green Belt Plant Some Shelter for Your Birds

It's hard to imagine how the tiny black-capped chickadee and other small birds survive the kind of extreme cold we endured a few weeks ago. But they do! Birds are well-equipped to handle cold temperatures if they are well-fed and can find effective shelter. During the day they eat voraciously to build the fat reserves that get them through cold nights. Birds will fluff their feathers to trap layers of warm air for insulation.

Shelter out of the wind and snow is crucial for a bird's survival. At night some birds will roost in cavities while others are huddled within the tangle of branches of trees and shrubs. It's important they aren't disturbed – moving around uses precious energy reserves. Night-prowling cats and other predators will disturb birds off their roosts, leaving them exposed and vulnerable. Other types of activity will disturb night-roosting birds too. Earlier this winter I noticed that when arriving home after dark I would disturb the cardinals roosting in a cedar tree near the driveway. Luckily I was able to find an alternative place to park, leaving the birds at peace.

Birds do die of course. In the past week I've found a dead Carolina wren and a yellow-bellied sapsucker near my back door. A friend in Oklahoma recently found two dead pine siskins and a white-winged dove. It's rare to see large die-offs although they can happen. Years ago my husband found many dead starlings scattered under a tree after a bad winter storm in Nebraska – these surely were the victims of exposure.
~ Jennifer Delisle

Find Jennifer's Project FeederWatch blog posts on the JAS website under the "Birding" tab.

★ Go there to see her video of a super fluffed up White-crowned Sparrow enduring frigid temps.



Juvenile (left) and adult White-crowned Sparrows.
By Allan Brooks.

Under Our Noses

Posted by Bob I. Yang on 2/23/21.
Reprinted with permission.

"My wife and I visited Roe Park in Overland Park late Tuesday afternoon, 2/23. Walking off the trail at a bench affixed with a plaque bearing the inscription "In loving memory of Duke" (38.938625, -94.642096), we made our way through 20 feet of brush to the bank of the Indian Creek. In complete stealth and standing high above the water, we observed 3 male and 2 female hooded mergansers frolicking in the confluence of Indian Creek and a feeder stream.

From 4:48 to 5:39 p.m., the mergansers seemed totally carefree. Finally, a flock of mallards interrupted their fun. All this avian activity took place practically under our noses - right here in the heart of the city. In Roe Park itself, throngs of children and adults were all over the trail, enjoying a warm and sunny day."

See Bob's other photos at: <https://ebird.org/media/catalog?taxonCode=hoomer@ionCode=&mediaType=p&userId=USER436320>



Adult male Hooded Mergansers. Top one has crest raised for display while the bottom one has partially lowered his crest.
By
Bob I. Yang

Dyck Arboretum Native Plant Classes Online

The Dyck Arboretum of the Plains in Hesston is offering native plant gardening classes online. March 25th will be "No Fail Natives"; the April 8th topic is "From Lawn to Lush: Creating a Native Front Yard. Classes cost \$5 each and start zooming at 7 pm. Register and learn more: <https://dyckarboretum.org/arboretum-event/native-plant-school-winter-2021-online/>

Environmentally conscious gardeners will be thrilled that the Lawrence compost facility is opening for the season on March 6th from 9-2. Loading your own compost is always free, but on March 19 & 20 from 9-2, the city will load your truck or trailer for you for \$10.00. Compost builds your soil and reduces the need for fertilizer. Your garden will be so happy.

National Audubon Photo Contest

Every year National Audubon holds a photo contest with ever more spectacular results. This year's contest is open for submissions now and until April 7, 2021 at noon. There are several categories: professional, amateur, youth, Plants for Birds, and videos.

The awards include cash prizes of \$1,000 up to \$5,000 for the Grand Prize. The prize in the youth category is 6 days at renowned NAS Hog Island Camp in Maine in summer 2022. *Plus* winning photos are published in the *Audubon* magazine, featured on the NAS website and circulated around the country in a traveling photo show. Well worth you talented, bird-loving photographers out there taking the trouble to submit some shots.

See all the rules at <https://tinyurl.com/4mpt9pp5> or just google Audubon Photography contest.

Internet's Latest BFF is a real life BFF!

Have you heard of Elizabeth Ann? Web denizens are in love with her. She is the first cloned Black-footed Ferret, & the first cloned endangered species in the U. S. (Przewalski's horse was cloned in Europe last summer.)

Black-footed ferrets were believed extinct until a small colony came to light in 1981. Unfortunately, of 18 members of that group taken into captivity, only 7 bred successfully. 40 years of captive breeding and careful reintroduction efforts (Audubon of Kansas spearheaded a successful reintroduction in Logan County!) have produced a population of 400-500 animals; but that genetic bottleneck of 7 founders makes the species very vulnerable to defects and disease.

Elizabeth Ann, who, as you can see, is truly adorable, was cloned from tissue preserved at the San Diego Zoo from Willa, one of the original colony who did not have offspring. Thus Elizabeth Ann represents crucial genetic diversity for the species. Plans are to analyze frozen sperm samples and living males to



find the "mates" that will lead to the most diversity in her kits. (Facts from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smart-news/elizabeth-ann-first-cloned-black-footed-ferret-180977065/>)

Fathoms: The World in the Whale

by Rebecca Giggs

Reviewed by McKay Stangler



This month we turn our attention away from the skydwellers to focus on a creature that, for most of us Midwesterners, is a world apart. In *Fathoms: The World in the Whale*, Australian writer Rebecca Giggs has written a meandering (in the best sense) tour of what may be the world's most mysterious group of animals.

It's not quite science journalism and not quite nature writing and not quite a memoir—is there a term for books like these? “Creative nonfiction” is the usual catchall name for this sort of effort, but that's not quite right either. It's the sort of book you wish there were more of. Giggs simply wants to talk about whales, about why they are so enchanting and astonishing, as if she had pigeonholed you in the corner booth of a Mass St. bar and asked if you want to change your life.

Will this book change your life? I hope so. Consider that for all our scientific knowledge, for all our alleged mastery over nature (barring, say, pandemics), we know next to nothing about whales. Or sharks. Or most ocean creatures, even those that dwell in shallow waters. Oceans cover the majority of this planet, and we know virtually nothing about them—at least when compared to our knowledge of *terra firma*. Is this a gap in our knowledge, or more of a yawning chasm? Take a look at a world map and try to imagine that the oceans are the dominant feature, and the measly continents merely a blank space.

A sperm whale, which thanks to Melvillean efforts is probably the best known species after the gargantuan blue, was found with an entire greenhouse in its stomach. Not the *contents* of a greenhouse—the greenhouse itself, with all the contents still inside it. Imagine the scale of a creature that could do that. Imagine what sort of planet we've created in which western European greenhouses, growing produce artificially to feed humanity's decidedly non-seasonal tastes, end up in the bellies of creatures nowhere near western Europe.

Clearly there is much we don't understand. There is a famous story from a Jacques Cousteau expedition, when the *Calypso* accidentally ran a propeller into a baby whale in a pod that had suddenly broken the surface. The other whales formed a protective ring around it as the crew listened, heartbroken, to the whales speaking—what other term to use?—to each other. The tone of the whale sounds increased in intensity, then they all suddenly disappeared. Within one minute, the sharks had arrived.

Did the whales know the sharks were coming? Did they issue a warning to each other? What else might their obvious intelligence include? Did you know a single whale is worth 1,000 trees in terms of carbon absorption? Perhaps you are asking yourself, as I did throughout this book: do I actually know anything at all about whales?

They were once the darling of the conservation movement. No doubt you can recall the “Save the Whales” stickers and the vigilante ships pursuing Japanese whaling vessels. But attention fades. We move on to the bald eagle and the black-footed ferret and the spotted owl. Worthy causes all, to be sure. But what of the whale? It is left to swim among our detritus, our endless plastic sloughing off, our microparticles and floating patches of garbage. Giggs writes that whales end up ingesting so much pollution that, in a very real way, they become pollution themselves. Some humpbacks found dead have so much plastic inside them that they qualify as toxic waste and have to be treated by authorities as such.

May I posit that part of the problem, when it comes to whales, is that they are Out There? It's easy to see, say, deforestation: “Hey, there are fewer trees over there than there used to be.” But think about your own generation of garbage. What did you do with that plastic bag? You threw it *away*. But there is no *away*, of course. Not to whales. They themselves are the *away*. Our trash ends up with, around, *inside* them.

This is a terrible shame. But it can change, and perhaps this book can help.

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Become a Member: Just \$20 to join both National Audubon and Jayhawk Chapter.

___ **National Audubon Society membership is \$20.00.** Members receive four issues per year of the Audubon magazine and will be enlisted as members of their closest chapter. Members also receive 9 issues per year of the JAS newsletter and are entitled to discounts on the books and feeders we sell to raise funds to support education and conservation projects. (Make your check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to our JAS membership chair at the address below.) You may also join National Audubon online at https://secure.audubon.org/site/Donation2?df_id=9431&9431.donation=form1&s_src=2015_AUDHP_topbanner-button-menu.)

___ **Chapter-only membership to Jayhawk Audubon Society is \$10.00.** (Make check payable to Jayhawk Audubon Society.) You will not receive the Audubon magazine. *Those with National Audubon memberships are encouraged to support the chapter by voluntarily paying these dues.* Chapter membership expires annually in July. JAS is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

___ **To join or donate to Audubon of Kansas** make check payable to AOK or use this online link - <http://www.audubonofkansas.org/joindonate/>.

Please send this completed form & your check to JAS c/o Kristine Latta, P.O. Box 3741
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